IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A steel wire for a high-strength spring having superior workability, the steel wire comprising tempered martensite, and comprising by mass:

C: 0.53 to 0.68%;

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%;

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%;

Cr: 1.4 to 2.5%;

Al: 0.05% or less, excluding 0%;

at least one member selected from the group consisting of Ni: 0.4% or less, excluding 0%; V: 0.4% or less, excluding 0%; Mo: 0.05 to 0.5%; and Nb: 0.05 to 0.5%; and

a remainder consisting essentially of Fe and inevitable impurities;

wherein:

the steel wire has a prior austenite grain size number of 11.0 or larger; and

a ratio ($\sigma_{0.2}/\sigma_B$) of 0.2% proof stress ($\sigma_{0.2}$) to tensile strength (σ_B) in the steel wire is 0.85 or lower.

Claim 2 (Original): The steel wire according to Claim 1, wherein the content of manganese ranges from 0.5 to 1.5%.

Claim 3 (Original): The steel wire according to Claim 1, wherein the 0.2% proof stress ($\sigma_{0.2}$) is raised by 300 MPa or more when annealing at 400 °C for 20 minutes is conducted.

Claim 4 (Original): A high-strength spring formed of the steel wire according to Claim 1.

Claim 5 (Original): The high-strength spring according to Claim 4, wherein:

the spring has a core part of a hardness Hv ranging from 550 to 700;

the spring has a compressive residual stress on an surface thereof at -400 MPa or lower; and

the residual stress of the spring is changed from a compression to a tension at a depth of from 0.05 mm to 0.5 mm from the surface of the spring.

Claim 6 (Original): The high-strength spring according to Claim 4, wherein:

the spring has a nitriding layer on a surface thereof;

the spring has a hardness Hv ranging from 750 to 1150 on the surface thereof;

the spring has a core part of a hardness Hv ranging from 550 to 700;

the spring has a hard layer of a hardness Hv larger than the hardness of the core part by 15 or more, the hard layer having a depth ranging from 0.02 mm to 0.15 mm;

the spring has a compressive residual stress on an surface thereof at –800 MPa or lower; and

the residual stress of the spring is changed from a compression to a tension at a depth of from 0.05 mm to 0.5 mm from the surface of the spring.

Claim 7 (New): The high-strength spring according to Claim 4, wherein, when the spring is subjected a fatigue test under a load stress of 760 $\pm$ 650 MPa at a temperature of 120 °C, the spring is capable of undergoing ten million cycles without breakage.